

## Why I didn't pay tax (1985 - 1993)

In 1980 - three years before the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons - I began approaching governments about widespread abuse of persons disabled by environmental sensitivities. I did so as a concerned citizen and as a reporter - as a health consumer and as a human rights complainant. I did so as an activist and as a formal representative of people being abused.

Officials said our problems were all in our minds. This had an effect on professional reputations and careers. Self-sufficiency became difficult when special needs such as accessible education, housing, employment, transportation, and so on, were denied.

It provoked spouses to question emotional integrity. This put a strain on trust in relationships, contributing to family breakups, alienation, and other personal tragedies, including suicides according to one Chief Coroner.

Officials based their abusive comments on an absence of information about the physiology involved. We don't normally trash the reputation of members of an identifiable group on the basis of an absence of information. This is called arbitrary interference.

When the public service and the medical profession were approached about their members' abusiveness, leadership claimed abuse was unavoidable when dealing with a new phenomenon. The basic principal of protection from arbitrary interference seemed not to exist - for us, for the time being.

The facts were also usually ignored. Disabling sensitivities have been with us for generations; they can be caused by a variety of diseases; there have been supportive articles in mainstream medical journals for a century.

I have sworn an oath of loyalty. It is disloyal to submit to arbitrary measures, so in 1985 - two years into the UN Decade for the Disabled - I stopped paying tax. As I told the Revenue Minister's office "The deal is off". One of his assistants wished me all the best with my "crusade", but no-one took action to end the abuse.

Meanwhile, abused individuals continue to suffer lost careers, family breakups, and personal damages.

Authorities allow physical and emotional abuse - as long as the abuse is carried out or recommended by doctors. Normal rules of protection from arbitrary interference somehow do not apply. We might as well be living in Mount Cashel and protesting against the Church.

In 1987, I sent a letter to all members of the federal cabinet reminding them of my tax boycott. Federal politicians "sympathized" but did nothing to stop human rights violations involving horrific abuse. Health ministers were leaving high risk groups vulnerable to increased disability, harassment, and cruelty in government funded and regulated facilities.

Professionals in the public service still claim to be incapable of identifying adverse differential treatment in the medical profession, years after commissioned reports identified specific prejudices. One 1985 report, by a judge and five doctors, castigated those who said the problems were all emotional, declaring the label "clearly untenable".

A 1990 report from Health and Welfare urged "respect and support", but a psychiatrist chosen to chair another Health and Welfare conference a year ago refused to allow the participants to vote on measures to end ongoing abuse. Health and Welfare has not been overly responsive to rights awareness efforts from the Secretariat for Disabled Persons or the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

This year - the closing year of the UN Decade for Disabled Persons - the abuse of children with behaviour problems influenced by sensitivities continues. It is ignored by ministers responsible for Education, Children's Aid Societies, or for prosecuting child abusers. Ontario's past Chief Coroner said the public service has caused "frustrations" contributing to suicide, yet publicly funded professionals continue to abuse with impunity.

Unlike other outlets, government funded radio and TV networks have yet to report the consequences of the abuse, even as survivor allegations. Reports refer only to hurt feelings while ignoring more substantive concerns.

Of course, if persons with this disability are protected from arbitrary interference, and if government-funded journalists break their silence about the extent of damages and the arbitrary basis for the abuse, I would be willing to negotiate a starting date to resume paying taxes...say sometime between the years 2000 and 3000?

Meanwhile, I have become accustomed to enduring the government's whim.

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